

CONSTITUTION
& BY LAWS
OF THE
Schwenkfelder
Society

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Schwenkfelder Society

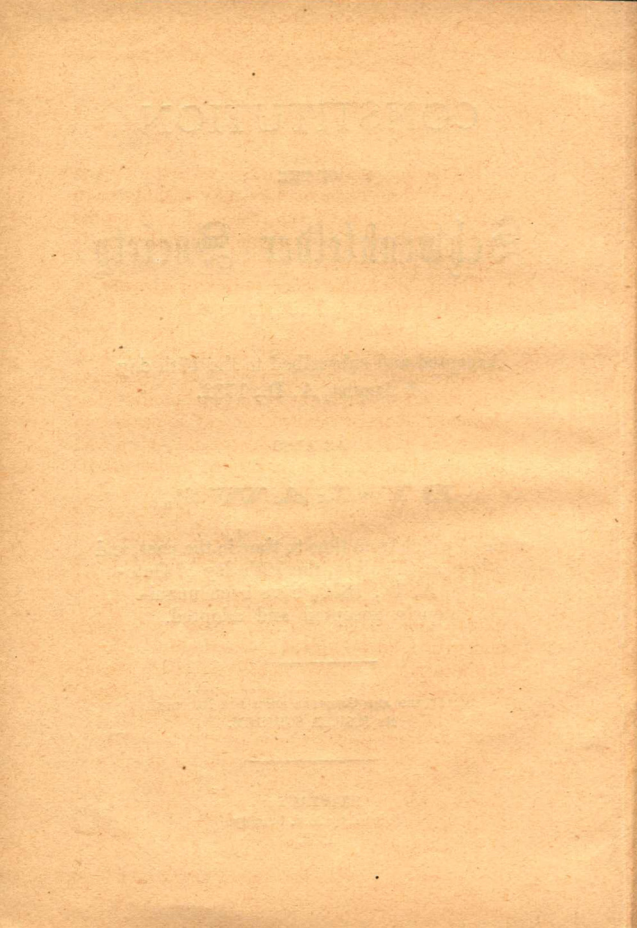
WHICH IT HAS
Accepted and subscribed to the 17th day
of August, A. D., 1782.

AS ALSO
BY-LAWS,

some of which from time to time in the past, and
others at this date, the 19th day of Octo-
ber, A. D., 1850, have been unani-
mously accepted and adopted.

COLLECTED AND COMPILED FROM THE RECORDS
By JOSHUA SCHULTZ.

SKIPPACK:
Printed by A. E. Dambly.
1882.



PREFACE.

By the publication of this NEW WORK, it is supposed that some readers may wish to have some information for the reason of said publication, and on that account, the following is herewith presented.

The title of this work indicates already in part its purport. This work is formed from concise abstracts taken out of different records, but the greater part out of the written Memorandum of the Secretary of our religious Society, which abstracts (except the Fundamental-Rules,) have never yet appeared in print, as *rules, decrees, resolutions*, etc., and now the same are to be arranged under the title, THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS, and this all to the main design, that it may serve partly to secure a commendable, uniform, good discipline and christian decorum; but as it will be observed, the chief end intended is *the glory of God*, according to whose divine love-nature and image man may again be formed, and with Him be united; — and since against the attainment of this noble end there stands arrayed in arms as the chief enemy, the original depraved *self*, which would violently prevent the accomplishment of this holy purpose, on this account have our beloved forefathers in their religious affairs regarded it as very proper that there should be many and needful *decrees* made against this said enemy, and that

these decrees must be most carefully maintained ; as once in particular, father Christopher Schultz, senior, expressed himself, A. D., 1782, in a work called "PRESENTATION OF USEFUL PARTS," (*Vorschlag nützlicher Stücke*,) which, as is known, was embraced in 17 sections, which afterwards were held as *Fundamental* or *Principal Rules*.

This "CONSTITUTION" known as the "PRESENTATION OF USEFUL PARTS," was approved and subscribed to, as previously observed, in A. D., 1782, by the generality of the Schwenkfelder people, to whose encouragement and spiritual support, father and preacher Christopher Schultz had contributed so largely.

And since from that time hence, it was regarded as necessary to make many *Decrees* and *Rules*, the same having been accepted and approved, and as these are not now so generally known particularly by the youth and the heads of young families, which *Decrees* and *Rules* many of these same persons desire to know and understand more fully, therefore, the *desire for such a publication* is the occasion of this little *Work*, which, it is hoped, may serve a good purpose to *all*, as well as to our nearer neighbors and fellow-men, and may it all succeed to the building up of the kingdom of grace of Jesus Christ and to the honor of the great God ; may He then to this end, bless it with the dews of heaven even unto the remotest times—is the wish and prayer of the

COMPILER.

CONSTITUTION OR FUNDAMENTAL RULES

OF THE

SCHWENKFELDER CHURCH

Approved A. D., 1782.

ARTICLE 1. That every person who wishes to be a member of this Church should be deeply concerned to have a proper *foundation** and an approved *ideal*, (prototype.) After which they shall conform themselves in all things, and according to which they shall constitute their bond of union.

ART. 2. This foundation and model such have who are members of a religious society, which model they may always have in their conduct before their eyes, as a fixed and approved mark or goal which they with one another, with becoming zeal and energy should seek virtuously to attain to.

* THIS FOUNDATION IS THE DIVINE NATURE ITSELF with the emanation of its virtues, (to whose likeness man is ordained,) as the divine nature in a general way has been made known, but more particularly in the works of creation, of redemption, and of sanctification, according to the teaching of Divine revelation. This ideal is the pattern, which the Apostles, particularly Paul, have laid down in their sketch (Umriss) to the christian churches, among which the epistle to the Ephesians is a concise masterpiece.

ART. 3. In God's nature one beholds first of all *love*, as that excellent outflowing virtue, which binds together God and man. If they wish to take sure steps in the aforesaid approximation, then must they in the first place, unite themselves and maintain their unity in this bond of perfection.

ART. 4. If they build themselves up upon this foundation-principle of the divine nature, namely, *love*, then will their one single immovable chief design be and remain : (a) the *glory of God*, and (b) the *advancement of the general good of each fellow member*.*

ART. 5. To accomplish such an end, among their congregational affairs, in the first place, their concern must be directed to a good regulation of *public worship*,† which shall proceed out of the aforesaid *Foundation*, and which shall agree with the aforesaid *ideal*.

ART. 6. *The doctrine of the Gospel* or of *the word of God*,‡ is that treasure, which the Lord Jesus gave to his apostles, and com-

* Let every one remember the two tables of the Commandments, (the decalogue,) and how Christ and Paul summed up the same. But the opposition to the keeping of the Commandments, is the inborn, depraved SELF, which, as the greatest chief enemy against this end, stands constantly arrayed in arms, and would prevent it, and it is on this account, that there must so many DECREES be made against it, the same too must also be most carefully observed and maintained.

† Namely the DIVINE SERVICE, which the worship of God demands of them and whereby the highest real good of each member also at the same time in the most suitable manner can be advanced.

‡ This doctrine has at the same time in itself and points out,

manded, that by it the people were to be called and assembled to Faith, and when assembled, they were to be nourished and also governed by it. The doctrine of the gospel is the principal instrument (or part,) in worship, and is the law of all the religious exercises.

ART. 7. Consequently they (the members) must not only be partakers of this treasure, but they also at the same time must carefully see to it, that the *doctrine and word of God* be preserved by them, pure and simple, and that the same (the doctrine and word of God,) be practiced by them, without which they cannot be and remain a christian people.

ART. 8. This involves the necessity of having persons among them who can understand, practice, and expound the *doctrine*; otherwise, it would lie dead, and how would it then accomplish the good referred to in the 6th Art. ? therefore in respect to this matter, there must be proper plans devised.

ART. 9. At the same time it is necessary that continuous effort and proper arrangement be made for the instruction of the youth, both as to the manner in which instruction is to be imparted in the schools, as also the instruction itself, as to its subject matter, which is the

how the inward disposition of each single individual should be constituted in divine worship; that, thereby such may be in agreement with the FOUNDATION and IDEAL, for which each one for himself must earnestly seek: But the instruction at this place is in reference to church duties and institutions,

word of God, or christian doctrine ; for without said effort and provision, the main end as indicated in Art. 4. will not be secured, neither will the doctrine remain current.

ART. 10. The repeated voluntary meetings for public worship, together with the appointments of time and place for the same, are to be also the concern and under the direction of the Society as such, i. e., the Society as a whole is to determine them.

ART. 11. Next to the appointments of the *Divine services*, and the *fostering of the word of God*, a religious Society (if it in anywise would accomplish its purpose,) must care for a praiseworthy education and discipline of its members, that through the same, (1) as against the attacks and hinderances of the evil one, a guard may be placed, in order that the said attacks and hinderances may be restrained ; or, when they (the attacks and hinderances,) have already entered, may again be removed. (2) to help to a good and useful deportment in intercourse and conduct, as also under all sorts of occasions and occurrences to offer to each other the helping hand, and thus virtue and good morals be thereby promoted.

ART. 12. That they have among them certain laws and regulations whereby they may know who belong to their church or not ; as also that they use diligence in order that correct records may be kept of all that is enacted

among them, and upon which they have mutually agreed, in things pertaining to discipline, so that no one may excuse himself on account of ignorance, but on the contrary, conform himself thereto accordingly.

ART. 13. Since they then also to the exercising of commendable discipline, necessarily need good rules, so also for good deportment, or good morals, as also to contend against evil, and to know these two from each other, the revealed will of God as embodied in the *ten Commandments*, according to their whole and complete sense, will be to them the best and most sufficient rule.

ART. 14. Besides this, in agreement with this main end and these rules, they will be mindful of useful and becoming institutions, that they under all sorts of circumstances, viz: marrying, discipline of children, housekeeping, deaths, burials, and the like, may be preserved in commendable harmony.

ART. 15. The practice and maintenance of such discipline and disposition will always have their oppositions, because we ever carry them (these oppositions,) even from nature in our bosoms; hence, it will here likewise be necessary to have faithful persons who will see to it that discipline and good order are not destroyed, but on the contrary, that the same be by each member properly maintained, guarded and promoted.

ART. 16. But in order that for such persons such services and duties may not become too difficult but be made possible and endurable, each and every member must through good regulations take part in the said exercise and supervision, whereby at once on the first observance of an outbreak of offence, its progress may be arrested, and thus the deacon, (Hufschler,) may be spared from being burdened therewith.

ART. 17. That certain conferences also may be appointed, according to the convenience of time, and the demands of the circumstances of the general good ; at which the condition of the Church, in matters respecting its weal or woe, may be considered ; at which all questionable and litigious things may be decided ; and at which conferences, in every way the general welfare and useful institutions of the society may be cared for.

REMARK.

Since then the *Schwenkfelder Church* has accepted the preceding *rules* as the *foundation* of their common deportment, from the year 1782 until the present year 1850, so should these same *Foundation Rules* be also further regarded as the *Constitution* of the Church.

But there are yet many other *decrees* extant, which the Church then already accepted as she subscribed to the *Constitution*, some of which have been taken from the *Fundamental-Rules*, and others as being equitable and conformable to the Holy Scriptures, and in respect to christian discipline and order were so looked upon and regarded; as also yet many other *resolutions* from that time hence, as commendable and christian, were also so regarded and accepted, as such are extensively to be found in the *Memorandum*.

Thence it is that it was necessary to have the following *sections* and *articles*, as an *Abstract*, compiled and properly arranged, that one may therewith have at hand the most necessary *resolutions* and *laws*, and that each fellow-member, old or young, may know how to conform himself accordingly, and that no one may plead ignorance as a plea to excuse himself.

We will treat the following yet under five sections, namely:

First,—*The Office of Teacher.*

Secondly,—*The Office of Deacon.*

Thirdly,—*The Office of School-trustee.*

Fourthly,—*The Office of Treasurer of the Poor-Fund.*

Fifthly,—*Of different Rules and Decrees.*

FIRST SECTION.

Of the Ministry.

ART. 1. According to the 6th, 7th and 8th Articles of the *Constitution*, this Church in the first place has to provide for the *Ministry*; and to this office of the Ministry, to elect persons who are able to understand, to exemplify and expound the *doctrine*, (of the church). Therefore, when the necessity for the appointment of a new minister exists and the same is clearly manifest in the affairs of the Congregation, then shall the Congregation be convened for the said purpose of appointing or electing a person or persons to said office of minister; and to the accomplishment of this purpose, the said convened congregation after religious devotion and hearty prayer, and then in the fear of God, shall proceed to vote for some person or persons for said office of the gospel ministry.

ART. 2. But no person shall be voted for, for this office, who shall fail to have a good testimony for honesty and genuine sincerity.

ART. 3. The persons to be voted for by the Congregation for this office, should also be in possession of such qualifications of body and mind which are so very highly necessary to

preaching, viz : health of body, sound understanding, good memory, good discriminating judgement, &c. See, the *Compendium*, Article 18, of the *Office of Teaching*, to which the Christian reader is hereby directed.

ART. 4. The election shall be by the votes of the male members* of the Congregation ; and the person or persons who have received the highest number of votes, are to be regarded as elected.

ART. 5. That such person or persons then by the Grace of God shall accept the office of Minister of the Gospel, and shall endeavor with much diligence to serve the church in said office according to the gift that is in them ; and in a plain and unaffected manner, declare the whole Counsel and will of God.

ART. 6. When such Minister or Ministers of the Gospel then further manifest real sincerity, love and interest in their work, and also give satisfactory evidence of soundness in christian doctrine. (upon which latter point there must be particular regard had), then after this *only* can such be invested with all the powers and rights of a *full Minister* ; but this investiture can only be by the properly

* When here, as also further on, it will be observed, that by a majority of the male members something shall be decided and determined, the sense and meaning of the same is this, viz : By THE MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS WHO FOR SUCH A PARTICULAR THERETO APPOINTED DAY AND TIME WERE PRESENT, SHALL THE MATTER BE DECIDED.

expressed consent of a majority of the male members of the Church the Minister is to serve.

ART. 7. Resolved, that freedom shall be given in extraordinary cases when ministerial service should be voluntarily offered; that is it *shall* be allowed when public consent thereto is given by a majority of the male members of the Congregation.

ART. 8. *The duty of the Minister is:* To preach the Word of God in its purity and simplicity; to place before the people the counsel and Will of God; and to see to it that all may be instructed in the creed, (the articles of faith); to devoutly and properly administer the Sacraments; to preach the gospel, to exhort, to teach, and to comfort, to reprove and discipline; also to live a holy life before God and men, be a light in the world and the salt of the earth, to walk in purity and self-denial, be perfect and upright, to visit the well and the sick, to appear before God with supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks for all men, for the small and the great, for magistrates and for subjects.—Acts 20: 20—27. 2 Tim. 4: 2. 1 Tim. 2: 1. Tit. 1: 9. 1 Pet. 5: 1—4.

ART. 9. Resolved further, that if persons or a person has been set apart and elected to the office of the gospel ministry, and feels himself under obligations to accept this service, out of a deep-felt duty toward God and man,

and to the quieting of his own conscience, and the Congregation wishes and demands the service, then it is allowed to no fellow-member to stand in the way of such a person or in anywise to be a hinderance to him, in case he wishes longer to remain a member of the Church, for it is here yet as it was in the time of the Apostles: "We ought to obey God rather than men." Acts 5: 29.

ART. 10. A Minister shall however perform his duty gratuitously. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." Matt. 23: 11. Whoever has received from his Creator more gifts and illumination, is obliged to use accordingly his entrusted pounds. Luke 19: 13. And that indeed gratis: "Freely ye have received, freely give." Matt. 10: 8.

ART. 11. Since the Minister according to this decree is to perform his duty entirely gratis and not for any reward, so is it also yet reasonable and hereby ordered, that he then also from all outlays, (expenses), which shall occur in his Church and which are named the common church expenses, (they may then arise or come from what cause soever); he, the minister, shall be exempt, and remain excused and excepted, because he without this, on account of his office, has to endure much labor and a heavy burden.

ART. 12. But resolved further, that liberty will be given to perform the duty of this office

voluntarily or not. The *love of Christ* should indeed constrain every person thereto. 2 Cor. 5: 14. Should this duty of preaching fall too heavily upon any person, so that he could not perform the same, for the reason of a want of good health of body, or a want of good natural ability, etc., etc., or of any similar cause or reason: that to such a person the liberty shall be granted, to lay down his office and to discontinue the duties of the same.

SECOND SECTION.

Of the Office of Deacon.

ART. 1. According to the 15th Article of the *Constitution*, each Church has to see to it that it elects persons who are to serve in the office of *deacon*.

ART. 2. Those who are to serve as deacons, are to be elected to that office out of the Church which they are to serve, and must possess a good testimony of unfeigned sincerity,* according to the 15th Article in the *Constitution*.

* When the christian Church is assembled as such, although many false christians and hypocrites be among them, yet must the spirit of God maintain its control and government therein, that the greater part, and in particular the DEACONS, must be obedient, godfearing, penitent and pious christian persons. But

ART. 3. Resolved, that each Congregation shall elect three persons who shall serve as deacons,—according to a resolution of year 1798.

ART. 4. Resolved, that the deacons shall be elected by the written ballots of the male members of the Church,—according to a resolution of year 1783.

ART. 5. Resolved, that at the annual conference one deacon shall be elected, to take the place of the one whose time has expired; and in case of death or removal of one whose term of office has not expired, one may also at the same time be elected to take the place of such a one. It shall be at the discretion of the Church to elect to the deaconship a former deacon after he has been out of office at least one year; or, to elect a person or persons who have never before been in said office.

ART. 6. It shall be the duty of the deacons: to watch over themselves and the Ministers, and over the whole flock or congregation, see Acts 20: 28. Also, over the doctrine and life of the Ministers, and over the conduct of the whole flock, to this end that good discipline and order, and in things in general a good christian decorum may be maintained, according to the mirror of life contained in the

when this is not the case there cannot in any way be maintained with judgement and righteousness a christian apostolic government, that is commendable to God, a blessing to souls, and to every person advantageous; yea, without such a government, no church of Christ can long be maintained.—Schwenkfeld.—Letter to the Pope, pg. 658.

ten Commandments, not only according to the outward literal interpretation, but also, and in particular, according to the real spiritual meaning,—so that the same might be attained to by each individual member for himself.

ART. 7. That they (the deacons) shall endeavor, according to the will of the Lord, to support the public worship of Almighty God, and as frequently as possible to be present at the same; to test the preached word, and to see to it that with many it may become fruitful in good works, and that many more may be brought to the true knowledge and be gathered to the people of God on earth, and that finally they may enter into the eternal rest in heaven.

ART. 8. The following six rules are to be found in the *Memorandum* of the year 1783, according to which the *Deacons* are to act, namely :

First,—The said *deacons* have to take for the most part as their law, the *ten Commandments*, and further, they must have regard to the 13th Article in the *Constitution*.

Secondly, That they are to give attention to all classes of the Church, — the old and the young, wherever any impropriety might show itself.

Thirdly, If any one brings a complaint to them, that they (the deacons,) shall inform themselves whether the complainant has also

done his duty in the matter in having had regard to the purport of the 16th Article of the *Constitution*.

Fourthly, That they take particular care to themselves when a complaint is made to them, that they entertain not the least judgment concerning it, until they have informed themselves very fully of all the particulars from both sides of the matter.

Fifthly, That when they have a matter to decide, they must have no respect of person.

Sixthly, When it is a matter that is not generally known, then should they (the deacons,) see to it that the same should be attended to in the most possibly quiet way, and be kept in becoming *secrecy*.

THIRD SECTION.

Of Office of School Trustee.

ART. 1. In pursuance of the 9th Article in the *Constitution*, every Congregation is obliged, and especially is it the duty of all parents to whom God has given children, to have very particular regard to this thing, that their children may be lifted out of ignorance, that in respect to the physical and temporal as well as the spiritual, they may receive learning and

instruction, otherwise, in reference to what is required in the 4th Article of the *Constitution*, God cannot reach his main end in man's creation, neither will his *doctrine* remain in force.

ART. 2. To the accomplishment of this end, the school trustees must assist the youth, and give them support in their endeavors to become instructed, especially when the circumstances, whether in the case of the parents or children, indicate the fact that the necessary means are wanting. So also in other cases, according to the discretion of said trustees, provision may also be made for instruction in the higher branches of useful learning, as Grammar and the original languages. That such help might be given to the youth in the matter of their education, already in the year 1764, a *Fund* was established, entitled THE SCHOOL FUND, and at the annual conference in May, two trustees to have charge of said fond were elected in those congregations.

ART. 3. Resolved, that in every Congregation two persons shall be yearly elected as school trustees, on the third Saturday in May,* according to the Act of incorporation of the year 1843.

ART. 4. The school trustees shall be elected by the votes or ballots of the male members of the church.

* The By-Laws now provide that the second and fourth Saturdays of May may be chosen as time for election.

ART. 5. It is the duty of the school trustees to receive and take in hand the established school fund, as also the voluntary bequests, and to seek to judiciously invest the same and then to give support out of the said fund to such who are getting school instruction and who find themselves in somewhat destitute circumstances ; and likewise to take of it and apply it to other cases when the congregation is unanimous in the matter, and has so ordered.

FOURTH SECTION.

Of the Office of Treasurer of the Poor Fund.

ART. 1. In this congregation there was already a long time ago a *Fund* established for the support of the poor and suffering, that the necessitous and the sickly, as also the old and feeble, might therewith be aided ; and, that of said fund some might be applied to other benevolent and reasonable purposes.

ART. 2. Resolved, that such a fund shall be further kept and supported, and further, that at each thanksgiving harvest meeting a collection shall be taken ; and the free-will offerings collected at such occasions shall be added to the existing fund ; and each congregation must see to it, that it elects a proper treasurer of said poor fund.

ART. 3. The election of a *treasurer* shall be by the male members of the church, after the way and manner that all the other officers are to be elected.

ART. 4. The duty of the *treasurer* of the poor-fund is and consists in this: to take and keep the established fund, and likewise all the voluntary bequests and collections, so to use the same as to have it increase, (or bring in interest,) and then also afterwards to pay out and apply of the same, when and where he shall be directed to, by the instruction of the congregation.

FIFTH SECTION.

Miscellaneous Rules and Decrees.

ART. 1. Of the manner in which members are received into the church.

1. It is very plainly taught in God's word, that man was originally created in the divine image; but alas, this glorious purpose of God with man was lost through his (man's) fall into sin;—thus, must then all persons who are or wish to be members of this church, very earnestly endeavor to become again partakers of the divine image and nature, and to this end shall sincere love to God and great concern for the salvation of their own souls be the great moving cause.

2. The following questions must be answered affirmatively by all such who wish to become members of this Church, *namely* :

(a) Dost thou believe in Jehovah, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost?

(b) Dost thou believe in the Holy Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, as containing the revealed will of the great God in the matter of our salvation?

(c) Are the Constitution and the Fundamental Principles of this Church known by thee?

(d) Dost thou believe that the Constitution and Fundamental Rules of this Church are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures, and therefore necessary to be observed?

(e) Dost thou believe that the christian *doctrine* we here own and confess, and which by the grace of God we mutually endeavor to practice, is in perfect agreement with the Holy Scriptures?

(f) Art thou honestly minded, by the help of God to keep thyself to this doctrine, and according to thy ability, help to keep up and advance the same?

3. A prayer. May God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, be with thee, (or you), and carry on the commenced work to its completion, for His name's sake.

4. Upon the above confession, every person with his own voluntary consent shall be ac-

cepted and received into the Church, whether he be in a single or married state, young or old, or from any denomination whatever, if he ratify the above questions with a sincere yea, and if there be good reason at hand to believe that there has been adequate instruction in christian doctrine and the life conformed to that doctrine, so shall he be regarded as a member, and may exercise the right, and shall perform the duties in every respect which every member of the Church is in duty bound to practice.

ART. 2.—OF THE SACRAMENTS.

1. *Of Baptism:*

We believe and confess holy baptism to be a Sacrament of faith, which the Lord instituted, a short time previous to his ascension. But the *doctrine* and the *faith* must precede such a divine act, so then there are in this sacramental rite two different waters: (1) A water of life, with which water the true high priest Jesus Christ baptizes the souls of men. (2) A sacramental outward baptismal-water which baptizes the outward part of man, upon the calling to and profession of the baptizer and the baptized for a testimony, that the person with a good intention has entered into a

new covenant with God ; and, because of the death and merit of Christ is minded to persevere in a true imitation of Jesus until the end of life.

2. *Of the Holy Communion :*

We believe and confess that Christ our Lord a short time before his last suffering and death, has instituted the Holy Communion for his (Christ's) believing Churches, or true believers, as a memorial : yet not in such a manner is the Holy Communion to be received, as if he (Christ) would be enjoyed in the bread and wine, or with them ; and much less has he made the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation wholly to depend thereon. By no means should the *material* eating be the spiritual ; for when our Lord would teach us heavenly things, he at all times used earthly comparisons, which the searcher of the Holy Scriptures very well knows. Therefore the Lord took bread, broke it and gave it to his disciples, and thereby taught what his holy body crucified on the cross would be to his true believers, namely, a food to the satisfying of hungry souls and consciences, after the same manner his blood quenching the eternal thirst. The disciples understood very well that the Lord wished to instruct them of the eternal benefits to be secured by his suffering and death, and that he did *not* mean the visible bread, but himself.

But when this memorial ordinance shall be solemnly observed with bread and wine by true believers, so we do confess that there are two kinds of eating and drinking in connection with this divine rite ; yet must christian love, as an infallible evidence of the right use, be the principal thing ; without this, it is pure delusion and coarse idolatry with which no true believer can stain himself.

The soul nobody can feed but God alone, our eternal High Priest, for Him has God the Father sealed to this work ; and He (Jesus), evermore gives himself to us for food and nourishment also *without* bread and wine.

Whenever the Sacraments, baptism and the Holy Communion, are solemnly celebrated, then must the Communicants be first well instructed in the *Articles of Faith*, (the creed) ; and not only this, but also to see to it that they are united to God in a state of grace, or in covenant of grace, in a correct knowledge of themselves, a knowledge of God, and especially of their Savior Jesus Christ. With Christ also according to the old man they have begun to be crucified and to die ; and according to the new man to become alive and raised out of the spiritual death of sin and the sleep of carnal security, and thus be able to entertain the sincere purpose of following after holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord,—all such persons are proper Communicants.

ART. 3.—OF REPENTANCE.

1. It is the duty of every member, according to the “old man” to die daily ; and according to the “new man”, to become alive, Eph. 4 ; to lay off the works of the flesh and to walk in love and purity, and in all christian virtues, thus to pursue after holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Heb. 12: 14.

2. The following vices are particularly before God sinful, reprehensible, condemnable, and to man an offence, and on that account they need to be publicly confessed in the Church, namely : false doctrine, blasphemy, idolatry, thoughtless swearing and cursing by the holy name of God, inconsiderate spending or desecration of the Sabbath day ; as also the neglect of the duty of divine worship, unlawful disobedience to parents, superiors and governments ; vindictiveness, implacableness, impurity, fornication, adultery, drunkenness, robbery, theft, fraud, lying, false witness, back-biting, slander, unrighteous greediness of gain, to take to himself in an unlawful manner the property of widows, or of orphans, or of his neighbors, &c., &c., &c.

3. The above *offences* demand true repentance before God and man, since God himself threatens a righteous curse against the transgressors of his laws, Deut. 27: 26.—“Cursed

be he that conformeth not to all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen."

4. When a brother or sister shall commit one of the above offences, or otherwise fall into a vice, or commit an error, whereby he or she offend God and man, and thereby *raise a scandal*, the same shall be restored in the spirit of meekness, according to Gal. 6: 1, 2:—"If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted, &c." Every member shall watch for the welfare of another. The brother or sister who has fallen or gone out of the way should and must be, in all meekness and brotherly love, reminded of his error and transgression, by a deacon; should no confession and repentance follow, then shall the deacon remind him again, and continue his exhortation to amendment, and if after all this there is no repentance and improvement to be expected, then shall the conduct of such a person offending be presented to the Church; should he not hear the Church, then shall he be dealt with according to the law of Paul, 1. Cor. 5: 13: "Therefore put away from yourselves that wicked person." Compared with Deut. 13: 5: "So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of you."

ART. 4. — GENERAL DECREES RESPECTING WEARING APPAREL.

1. With reference to the mode of dress the following rules shall be observed, which rules are taken out of D. J. J. Rambach's Instructive Theology, (Belehrungs = Theologie), page 1825.

In order that with the mode of dress there may be no abuse practiced, it must

a) Be comfortable, protecting both the body and the health.

(b) It must be adapted to prevent evil desires, that those members are thereby covered whose sight might stir up impure desires. It may

(c) Be suitable to one's condition, that is, one may wear such clothing as other christian and reasonable people of our condition, which best indicate and promote purity and humility. A christian may

(d) According to the circumstances of the time so arrange his clothing, that he for example, may go forth on a festival day (Ehrentage) different than upon a time of mourning.

(e) He may also adapt himself to the custom of the time and place, when such custom does not contain in itself anything that is sinful and does not conflict with propriety of conduct and decency; and whilst he does not place any holiness in this that he wears the

old style of clothing, he nevertheless should guard against at the same time imitating all the new styles, and much less will he make it his business to introduce new styles. A similar view in relation to the mode of dress is to be found in the book entitled: *Compendium or Doctrines of Belief*, (*Compendium oder Glaubenslehren*).

Such is the peculiarity of christian simplicity in respect to the use of wearing apparel.

ART. 5.—OF THE MARRIED STATE.

Persons who wish to enter into holy wedlock, are to observe the following rules and decrees, namely :

1. Both persons must be of the unmarried state.

2. The parents or guardians, as the case may be, of both the bridegroom and the bride, must be agreed to and express their consent to the undertaking of the contracting parties.

3. In every case they must place themselves under submission to their church, and have to affirm those questions, which are to be found in the above 1. ART. of *Miscellaneous Rules*, and which every person must affirm who will be a member of this Church.

4. When any person who is betrothed should be of *none* or of *another* denomination, and

wishes to become a member of this Church, this can be done, when such person

(a) Can prove himself to be possessed of a good moral and christian life, and

(b) Affirms the above question in ART. 1. of Miscellaneous Rules with heart and mouth, and submits himself in general to the *rules* and *decrees* of this Church, and will endeavor to conform his life to the same.

5. But such a marriage betrothel must then be publicly made known in the Church.

6. Shall a minister publicly make known a proposed marriage, so must it be plainly made known to him and he be correctly informed of the same, either by writing or word of mouth, by a deacon, or the parents or guardian of the bridegroom and the bride in order that he (the minister) may proceed with confidence and courage.

7. After this, marriage can take place by a full minister of the same church, upon the desired time; with the following exceptions, namely:

(a) Not upon Sunday or the Sabbath day.

(b) Not upon Lent, and

(c) Not in the time of Advent.

ART. 6.—OF DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN.

1. Should such who are given in marriage be blessed with bodily heirs, then shall they as

parents be concerned for their children ; and the parents are in duty bound to observe the following rules, namely : The first thing after the birth of a child is to thank God for his gift and the *safe deliverance* ; and furthermore, frequently and faithfully to recommend them, the children, to the Creator of all things ; and in the second place, to see to it, that a prayer be offered by a minister for each child in the house of the family, or upon request, publicly in the meeting house in connection with the regular divine service, according to a resolution and decree in the year 1823, providing that on account of the new-born child thanks must be publicly offered to God for the gift as also for safe delivery, and then further, to make intercession for such, that the Highest might receive it and be so merciful towards it, as thus to prepare its heart and soul that it may be useful to man, *honest* before God, and that it may live to its own welfare according to soul and body for time and eternity, so that when its career of life in this vale of tears is ended, that it then may receive from the hand of its Maker through grace for the sake of Christ, the unfading crown of life. Amen.

2. And furthermore, all parents have to see to it that their children afterwards are brought up in the fear of God, and in the discipline and admonition of the Lord. As

also that they according to the 9. ART. in the Constitution, may see to it and use great diligence that their children may be lifted out of ignorance; that is, that they may in the first place receive every kind of useful knowledge in common school instruction; and then also afterwards, in the second place, that they also may have good and sound instruction in *christian doctrine*, and so by it, each may be able to comprehend good evangelical truth, and thus protect himself from false doctrine, and finally be eternally saved.

ART. 7.—OF SECRET SOCIETIES.

Resolved further, that it is contrary to and against the *doctrine* and *confession* of this Church, that any member should connect himself with any such an *Order*, or with any *secret society*, as for example the Order of Freemason, Odd Fellows, and the like,—since it has pleased God to make known and to grant unto us his *word*, in which his will and purpose concerning the fallen human race is revealed; therefore, if any one will look into the mystery of godliness, let him follow the counsel of the Lord in his word, according to James 1: 5: —“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be

given him"; and, respecting the same rule, see what is recorded in Romans 12: 16 :—
 "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate."

ART. 8.— OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

1. This Church holds it to be in perfect conformity with duty to yield to civil governments the most submissive obedience in all reasonable things, where and when they are not in conflict with or militate against the conscience and the word of God, according to Rom. 13 :
 "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good and thou shalt have the praise of the same : For he is a minister of God to thee for good," &c.—
 Hence it is proper to give to governments taxes, fear and honor. Thus also teaches *the Wisdom*, (Christ,) in Proverbs 8: 15. 16 : "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth;"—therefore it is acknowledged to be conformable with christian duty, to make intercession for all the high officers of our land, and to pray to the Lord for them. See 1. Tim. 2.

2. Since civil government is from God, then a member of this Church may also serve in a governmental office, as did for example the judge Samuel, and the pious king David, and also Solomon and others who were believing and pious men, and administered governmental affairs. It is required that every one shall have a proper regard for his supreme Sovereign in heaven and not to deny Him his divine right, but to administer the duties of his office according to the revealed will and word of God.

3. Resolved, that the taking of an oath is not allowed in this Church, according to the bible injunctions, Matt. 5: 33. Jas. 5: 12.

4. Resolved, that no member of this Church is allowed to take up the sword in order to engage in war, for we believe that for christians there is only appointed "the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God," and hence, according to the testimony of our conscience, we can not transgress the authentic command of God which is contained in the sixth command of the holy ten Commandments, "*Thou shalt not kill.*"

5. On this account no person is allowed, as also according to a resolution of year 1828, to participate in military affairs, if he wishes to be a member of this Church.

6. Resolved, that a member of this Church must see to it, that he attend to and fulfils his

obligations and indebtedness without legal proceedings; no member who refuses to fulfil his legitimate duties and obligations, can further be a member of this Church, and should be excluded, according to a resolution of this Church adopted in the year 1797, and further expressly according to the law of Paul, 1 Cor. 6: 7. 8. ; and the doctrine of Christ: "Love thy neighbor as thyself," Matt. 22: 39. ; and Matt. 7: 12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."

7. Resolved, that every member shall have the freedom and the right to call upon the proper officers of the law, for the defence and preservation of his rights, his property and his honor, against a perverse brother, or any other fellow-man, who shall refuse to fulfil his duty towards him, or in any wise seek to injure him.

8. Resolved further, that no person shall misuse "the powers that be"; he dare not use the power of magistrates and law to covet and secure to himself, to his own advantage, in an unrighteous way, his neighbor's goods, or property, or honor.

ART. 9.

Resolved, that these *Rules* and *Decrees* shall be observed and obeyed, and nothing can be

taken from them or added to them, except by a majority of the members of the Church.

Resolved, that each Church shall procure and elect a secretary who shall keep an exact and correct record or *memorandum*, of all that is transacted and agreed to by the Congregation, at every regular business meeting of the Congregation.

Subscribed to and confirmed by
order of the Church, by

ISAAC SCHULTZ,
DANIEL KRIEBEL,

Present Secretaries of the Church.

